

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claim Status

Claims 1-89 are pending in this application, of which claims 5, 19, 27, 41 and 49-87 have been withdrawn due to a Requirement for Restriction. Claims 1-4, 6-18, 20-26, 28-40, 42-44 and 88-89 are currently being considered, of which claims 1, 22, 23 and 44 are independent in form. Claims 1-4, 6-18, 20-26, 28-40, 42-44 and 88-89 are currently rejected. Claim 46 is amended herein. No new matter has been added by this amendment.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 46-48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter that Applicants regard as the invention. More particularly, the Examiner asserts that the limitations “said user interface” and “said code attachment means” each lack antecedent basis. The Examiner further asserts that claims 47-48 are dependent from claims 46 and inherit the same rejection.

Claim 46 is amended herein to provide antecedent basis for the claim limitations “user interface” and “code attachment means.” Claims 47 and 48 depend from claims 45 and 47, respectively. That is, claims 47 and 48 do not depend from claim 46. Thus, no corrective action is believed required for claims 47 and 48. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 2, 4, 8-14, 16, 21, 23, 24, 26, 30-36, and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Yuri et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,249,715 (“Yuri”). Applicants respectfully disagree with the characterization of the claims and prior art in the stated rejection and respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Examiner asserts that Yuri discloses a work assignment system for assigning and composing a work formed from a plurality of work units to a plurality of stations, comprising a “display means for displaying names of the plurality of work units” in FIGS. 1, 11, 13-15 and col. 13, line 37 – col. 14, line 63.

FIG. 1 shows a schematic diagram of an assembly facility for an embodiment of Yuri’s invention [col. 5, lines 56-57]. FIG. 11 shows a flowchart illustrating additional steps of the distribution program of FIG. 8 [col. 6, lines 15-16]. FIG. 13 shows a pitch diagram showing a fundamental distribution pattern (e.g.; a time value marked by a most skilled worker), graphically showing each element work after being distributed [col. 6, lines 20-23]. FIG. 14 shows a flowchart illustrating a modifying handling distribution routine called by the distribution program of FIG. 11 [col. 6, lines 24-26]. FIG. 15 a pitch diagram graphically showing a fundamental distribution pattern of each element work after being distributed among the plurality of workers [col. 6, lines 27-29].

Thus, in FIGS. 1, 11, and 13-15, Yuri shows a diagram of an assembly facility, a flowchart of steps of a distribution program, a diagram of a distribution pattern, a flowchart of a routine called by the distribution program, and a diagram of another distribution pattern, respectively. However, none of these figures show the output of display 4 of Yuri’s invention. That is, none of these figures show the output of a display means of a work assignment system

for assigning and composing a work formed from a plurality of work units to a plurality of stations.

Moreover, at col. 13, line 37 – col. 14, line 63, Yuri discusses the operation of the flowchart show in FIG. 15 and FIGS. 12-15. In the cited section, the only discussion related to a display means of a work assignment system is in the discussion of Steps S17, S21, and S24, which are labeled as “OUTPUT OF CALCULATION RESULTS” in FIG. 11.

At col. 14, lines 5-9, Yuri describes step S17 and merely discloses:

Returning to the program of FIG. 11, when the calculation results at step S13 is equal to the condition shown by the solid line in FIG. 13, the calculated results are output at step S17, and each worker P is re-distributed among the stations at step S18.

That is, in this section Yuri fails to disclose or suggest a “display means for displaying names of the plurality of work units” of a work assignment system.

At col. 14, lines 5-9, Yuri describes step S21 and merely discloses:

At step S20, a value of this variation is re-investigated using numeric 6 formula from above. When the balance rate R_B equals or exceeds 90 percent, the calculated results are output as a favorable balance rate (step S21).

That is, in this section Yuri fails to disclose or suggest a “display means for displaying names of the plurality of work units” of a work assignment system.

At col. 14, lines 5-9, Yuri describes step S24 and merely discloses:

As indicated above, when the balance rate R_B is less than 90 percent, the redistribution handling routine is performed, while, when the balance rate R_B is at least equal to 90 percent, the calculated results are output at step S24.

That is, in this section Yuri fails to disclose or suggest a “display means for displaying names of the plurality of work units” of a work assignment system.

Therefore in the cited section and figures, Yuri merely discloses displaying ‘the calculated results’ and fails to disclose or suggest a work assignment system for assigning and composing a work formed from a plurality of work units to a plurality of stations, comprising a “display means for displaying names of the plurality of work units” as required by independent claim 1. Independent claim 23 is believed to define patentable subject matter for at least similar reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention as claimed is neither taught nor suggested by, and therefore is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of, Yuri. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 8-14, 16, 21, 23, 24, 26, 30-36, and 44 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 3, 6, 7, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 25, 28, 29, 37, 39, 40, 42, 45, 88, and 89 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Yuri as applied to claims 1, 2, 10, 23, 24, and 32 above.

Independent claim 22 requires, *inter alia*, “a plurality of clients, each of the clients having display means for displaying names of the plurality of work units.” Accordingly, Independent claim 22 is believed to define patentable subject matter for at least similar reasons to those stated above regarding independent claim 1. Claims 3, 6, 7, 15, 17, 18, 20, 25, 28, 29, 37, 39, 40, 42, 45, 88, and 89 depended directly or indirectly from independent claim 1, 22, or 23 and are also believed to define patentable subject matter.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention as claimed is neither taught nor suggested by, and therefore is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of, Yuri. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the

rejection of claims 3, 6, 7, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 25, 28, 29, 37, 39, 40, 42, 45, 88, and 89 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Dependent Claims

Applicants have not independently addressed the rejections of the dependent claims. Applicants submit that, for at least similar reasons as to why the independent claims from which the dependent claims depend are believed allowable as discussed supra, the dependent claims are also allowable. Applicants however, reserve the right to address any individual rejections of the dependent claims should such be necessary or appropriate.

CONCLUSION

For the above-stated reasons, this application is respectfully asserted to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable examination on the merits is requested. In the event that a telephone conference would facilitate the examination of this application in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided.

AUTHORIZATION


The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Amendment to Deposit Account No. **13-4500**, Order No. 1232-4672.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. **13-4500**, Order No. 1232-4672.

Respectfully submitted,
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By: _____


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